

## **Grants Given to Hispanics**

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VINELAND -- More than \$3.7 million in grants were awarded to 30 Hispanic community organizations Thursday, including \$86,746 for the city's Casa PRAC, Inc., according to a statement from the state Department of Community Affairs.

The grants were announced by DCA Acting Commissioner Charles Richman and Center for Hispanic Policy, Research and Development Executive Director Angie Armand at a ceremony at the Puerto Rican Action Board Day Care facility, in New Brunswick.

They were joined by Javier Inclan, director of the Governor's Office of Constituent Relations and Intergovernmental Affairs.

The funds were given to Hispanic community organizations throughout the state in order to help implement programs ranging from youth computer literacy to work-readiness services for adults.

"This program creates opportunities for those in the Latino community to further enrich themselves and their environment," said Richman in a released statement. "These grants will allow Hispanic community-based organizations to continue the excellent work they have done for individuals and families throughout the state."

Vineland's own Casa PRAC (Puerto Rican Action Center) Inc., located at 511 Grape St., offers a variety of services to residents of both the city and county.

"This grant supplements and sponsors the programs we offer for the community," said Casa PRAC Inc. Executive Director Jose A. Melendez. "We offer anything that people may need help with."

The social service offers programs such as Project HELP, which assists students in grades K-6 in classes; the Prevention Program, which works to stop domestic violence and child abuse; and the Multi-Service Program, which provides residents with everything from translation to transportation.

However, almost half of the funds go towards a program called Action YES, and prepares 15 to 17-year-olds for entering the workforce, said Melendez.

The grants are implemented through the DCA's Center for Hispanic Policy, Research and Development. The center seeks to empower the Hispanic community through inclusion in developing policy and professional services, according to a released statement.